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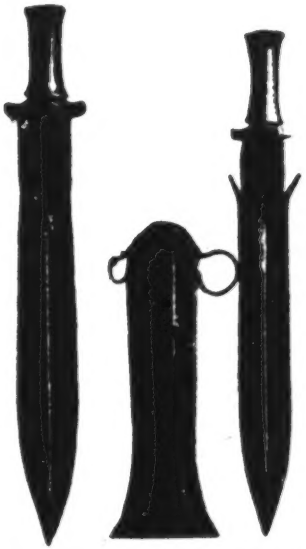

Fig. 80. Swords and Sheath made of Brass. One-fifth actual size.

726 Fang especially are extremely warlike and quarrelsome and not at all disinclined to military expeditions that promise to yield booty. At the same time, they know how to take full advantage of their forested land. They surprise the enemy at impassable [184] places, lie in ambush in the dense bush, and sometimes carry out night raids when the occasion is favorable, whereas generally the Pangwe is loath to undertake nocturnal expeditions. Furthermore, they impede the advance of the enemy through "chevaux-de-frise," that is, pointed sticks made of the bark of raffia leafstalks and planted in the ground, as well as through pitfalls which are well covered like the traps for game, but wider and [725] deeper, and similarly spiked on the floor. In hand-to-hand com- [824] bat they throw the spiked stems of Macaranga ledermanniana Pax (as~~s~~) between the legs of their enemies. /248/

/Figs. 81 and 82 appear here in the original text./

722 In unsettled times, women, children, and -- insofar as this 712 is possible -- movable property are taken to safety, that is, to hiding places in the forest or to friendly villages. Fortifications

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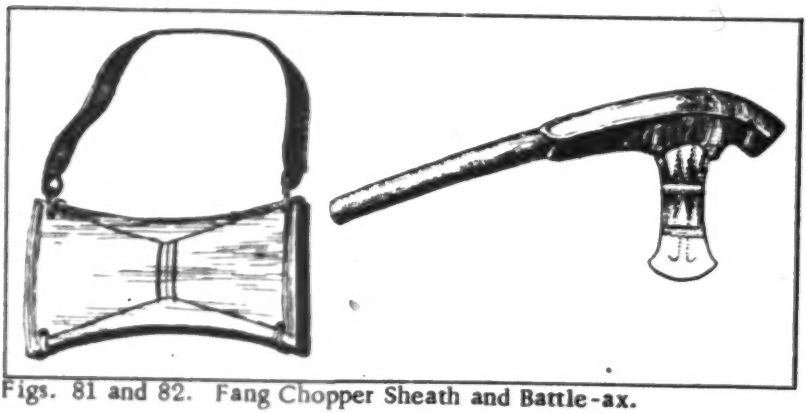

Figs. 81 and 82. Fang Chopper Sheath and Battle-ax.

712 exist, but only to a limited extent. As has already been mentioned
722 in the account of house construction /Ed., Vol. I/, the walls of the meeting house are built of halved trunks of the umbrella tree placed in layers over each other for the purpose of fortification. In addition, the village entrances are blocked off when danger threatens by means of fences or barricades made of sticks. The southern Fang especially can easily do this since they design their villages more compactly so that the meeting houses themselves almost block off the road. Only once did I see an entire village surrounded with a protective fence, a fairly strong paling consisting of vertical posts and laths connecting them. In front of the fence the terrain had been cleared by cutting down the bush, so that the approach of enemies could be easily discovered and prevented.

The following example will give a good idea of how feuds arise
579 and take their course.

On both sides of the Lo, a small tributary of the Campo, there
[361] are two communities of the Esseng kin group about 12 minutes apart, namely, Bebai and Ebäangon. The inhabitants of the three Bebai villages closest to Ebäangon are related to the Ebäangon people; the others of Bebai did not move into the territory until later and are unrelated to the inhabitants of Ebäangon. The most influential chief of the Bebai people, who are outsiders, is called Makina. For a long time he had been "talking impudently" to Schüe, chief of Ebäangon. One day, on the occasion of a festival for the souls which

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land, which the Pahouin will never acquire, for he considers it humiliating, he will perhaps develop a taste for the profit resulting from this work."

conquering society has imposed on the old Fang village an appearance which has often been mentioned: two uninterrupted rows (nkara) of huts surrounding a kind of courtyard closed at each end [712] by a "guardhouse" (abèñõ); sometimes a palisade of posts enclosing a banana plantation serves as a protection in the rear. Inside the huts there is only a limited amount of things which are easily [352] transportable: "goods" of value are stored in chests, the ancestors' altars (biéri) are kept in large cylindrical boxes. (2) There is no

2. Very similar to the "baskets of ancestors" carried by the Ba-kongo during their great migrations.

doubt that the grouping lived for a long time in a state of insecurity. This was primarily the factor which intervened to maintain a minimum size without which there was no real security. The causes contributing to the breaking up of groups, the organization of Fang society itself, the search for women and goods, and, finally, the agricultural methods, were dominated and largely impeded by this necessity. It appears certain that really large villages existed at the beginning of French occupation. V. Largeau refers to mfaġ with eight or ten "guardhouses"; F. Grébert speaks of ten to twenty of these "guardhouses," (3) and F. Meyé asserts

3. F. Grébert. Au Gabon [In the Gabon], Paris, 1932.

that "the normal population of a village was from 80 to 170 warriors, exclusive of women and adolescents." (4) According to estimates

4. Quoted by G. Sautter, op. cit., p. 124.

country and in the north of Boulou country) has put a considerable brake upon village nomadism, the planters not liking to move away from their plantations. When there is migration, the activity consists rather in the "swarming off" of a portion of the inhabitants, who go to found a new hamlet in a site favorable for cultivation, without there being from then on any necessary correspondence between family structure and settlement pattern. The new jal will no longer necessarily correspond to one family but may gather together several families from different and unrelated lineages (mvam).

The Pahouin village of former times was planned for defense. Situated in an oblong clearing, usually within reach of the nearest village (3 to 4 kilometers) by drum-telephone (nkul), it comprised two lines of contiguous rectangular huts, gable to gable, on either side of a courtyard or main street (nsẽ), blocked at either end by a guardhouse /men's house/ (aba, abẽ) allowing only a narrow entrance, often oblique, which was barricaded every evening. All doors gave onto the nsẽ; the outer walls having merely a few loopholes. Sometimes the village was encircled by a moat (ésalak) and traps, sometimes also by a stockade /akak). The most important subsistence plots (mefup) were in the forest, often quite far away, but near the village behind the huts were banana groves and kitchen gardens, while medicinal plants (bilok bi mebiãn) as well as tobacco were grown in the central nsẽ. The hut walls were made of bark (particularly of certain kinds of Ficus /fig/) which was wetted, then beaten flat and dried to form boards; these are the "carbotes" (from the English word "cardboard") still in use on the coast. These boards were fastened by lianas and pegs to posts set in a rectangle. The double pitched roof was of "tiles" made of raffia folioles (obaé, pl. abaé) folded in two and pinned with wooden splinters to the scantlings made of /42/ strips of the main leaf rib set parallel to the ridgepole. This ridgepole rested on forked posts, of which the two central ones had magical significance and were usually carved or at least painted. The dimensions of these dwelling huts rarely exceeded 6 by 3 meters, while those of the guardhouses (meba) might reach twice this. In each household the man had his private hut where he kept his most valuable possessions (biôm): chests containing loincloths, etc., weapons, drums, "medicaments" (mebiãn), his own seat, masks, and magical equipment. The women's huts, side by side with his and where the young children slept, were used as kitchens and contained carrying

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

to obtain any accounts touching on its introduction, beyond the fact "we learnt it from our fathers." No ceremonies are connected with it. There are no professional tattooers, but the natives frequently employ a man known to be skilful to ornament them. It is practised by both sexes; young lads are anxious to be tattooed because it makes them feel "real men," but the practice is not indispensable as a sign of manhood. The same blue pigment obtained from a tree fungus used in painting is mixed with ashes and employed for tattooing. The instrument used is a sharp piece of bamboo, a piece of sharp iron or a knife. The practice does not appear to be in any way connected with pagan worship. Social or family rank does not affect the designs employed. Fang tattooing is not always symmetrical, it usually commences with the face, and a favourite design on the cheeks somewhat resembles the bowl and stem of a straight pipe. Only one colour is employed. Tattoo marks and designs are mostly found on the face, chest, shoulders, arms and abdomen. Women frequently have the pipe pattern or a band across the cheeks, and occasionally upon the breasts.

Cicatrisation is largely practised. Small incisions are made in the skin with a sharp instrument, frequently a steel nail from an imported packing case obtained from the trade house, the nail being flattened out into a small knife blade; or a sharp piece of bamboo is used. The juice of a certain herb is rubbed into the incised wounds.

IV.—*Habitations.*

The houses are built mostly of bark; beams and rafters are made from the strong branches of forest trees and bamboo; they are secured by bush rope. The entire structure rests on the ground. It is very rare to find a Fang house on poles, except near the coast. There is no regularity in size of houses, but the form and material used is common to all the tribe. The average Fang house or hut is a low dark building, 15 feet long by 10 wide, and with walls about 6 feet high; the roof angle increases the height inside. Each family has a house; it is used, day and night, by all members of the family. Travellers usually occupy the *oleng* (palaver house), and the headman finds them sleeping quarters at night. When the owner dies he is usually buried close to the house, and the grave levelled off and soon obliterated. The houses comprising a town are built together, end to end. Towns consist of two rows of houses, with the main road passing between them. The *oleng* (palaver house) is built across one end of the main road. A large place is often composed of several towns or villages in line, the limits of each village being marked by its palaver house, and having its own headman. The Fang method of conveying information regarding the size of a place is by stating the number of palaver houses it contains. Stockades are frequently used at the entrance to a town, especially if the people have a palaver (tribal war) with a neighbouring tribe. The palaver houses and dwellings are also frequently stockaded. The natives often show considerable foresight and shrewdness by making use of the natural advantages of a position in selecting a site for their villages.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

fifteen) take their flint-lock muskets, heavily loaded with trade powder and handful of broken iron pot (iron trade pots) or small stones, and creep up close to the town after dark. Two men try to enter the town unobserved; if they succeed, then they knock at the door of a hut and say, "We are strangers travelling; give us fire and food." Directly a person inside the house opens the door, both men discharge their guns into the house, and immediately run for the bush toward their comrades. The whole town is soon in pursuit, and unless careful they run into an ambuscade prepared for them. A fight may occur, but more often the attacking party return to their town in triumph, shouting: "We are real men, we are real men, we have been to town, we have shot a man (or woman), we are men —real men." There is great rejoicing in their town, and a dance follows. If the palaver is a serious one, the town is often stockaded with split logs placed vertically in the ground; huts are likewise stockaded. Poisoned bamboo spikes are buried in the forest paths to wound the feet of an enemy. The weapons used and relied on to-day are flint-lock muskets. Spears are rapidly falling into disuse. The cross-bow is only used for shooting birds and small bush cats. It is a mistaken idea that the arrows used with the cross-bow are poisoned. Shields are not used. The chief causes of war are disputes over women, hence called "women palavers," and these feuds may last for years. Prisoners are often permitted to starve to death, and are occasionally killed and eaten. Owing to a bitter feud it is often impossible for the women to work in the gardens or fish on the river, the consequence being a great scarcity of food. In Foulabifong, where I resided, a woman palaver lasted over ten months, and the three adjoining towns were in a state of famine. A prisoner was nearly starved to death, and I had to repeatedly plead for him. During these feuds many women are shot while walking the paths. The Fang think it quite correct to shoot a woman; they say, "It is always *safe* to shoot a woman because she cannot shoot back." Prisoners are frequently exchanged, others are held as hostages.

Abel (war). Translation.

If people are going to war they go in crowds. If they approach near the town (*of* the enemy) they hold a council. An old man (one) he says thus: We will go to fire when? Then the others say, We will go in the night. Then they stay (sit) there until night. Darkness comes, and they light a torch. Then two or three people go to the town, and the other people remain in the bush. If the people who went to the town find people sleeping, then they point their guns inside a house and fire. Then people die. Then they go back running to meet the other people. Then they all gather in one place and return singing to their own town. Then they beat the drum and rejoice. Then the people who remained in the town say: Tell us the news as you went. Then they tell the news. Then the headman sits down and tells all the people in town that a person must not go anywhere alone. Then all the people hear, and all sit down (remain around their town to await events).